

PORTERFLUTE POD

S. 6 Ep7

STORYTIME:

SURVIVAL OF THE FLUTIST

Hi, I'm Amy Porter, and this is my podcast. My mission is to show people how to empower themselves through music, business and media. I try to see as clearly as possible how I can help. I showcase the music that I've played and the people I've met along the way. I'm a wife and a step mom. You might know me as a professor, a performer, a producer, a publisher, a recording artist.

I'm the founder of a couple of non-profits. Welcome in to my PorterFlute pod.

Welcome to Porter. Flute Pod. You're in our Storytime platform, and we're in the second of our two part series about two books from two flutist authors you know and love Last time, Delandria Mills and today Marianne Gedigian.

Written by flutist and teacher Marianne Gedigian, "Survival of the Flutist" details the journey of a flutist on their path to professional and personal fulfillment.

This stunning 80 plus page hardcover picture book was masterfully hand-lettered and illustrated by artist, flutist and teacher Patti Adams, produced by Adam Workman, founder and president of Flutistry Boston. Survival of the Flutist is exclusively available at FLutistry.com. With me in the

pod is Alan J, Tomasetti and Jordan Smith. And listen in as I discuss surviving with Marianne, along with the personal and professional journey with her flutist asking all the important questions in our life as creative artists and really, what success actually means.

Thanks for being in PorterFlute pod. I'm so happy you're here.

AP Marianne Gedigian is a seasoned international concert flutist and widely respected music educator. She joined Rice University's Shepherd School of Music as professor of flute starting in July 20, 23. Marianne was formerly professor of flute at the University of Texas at Austin Butler School of Music. Marianne Cadigan was a regular performer with the Boston Symphony Orchestra for over a decade, including several seasons as acting principal flute under Seiji Ozawa as principal flute with the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra and acting principal Flute with the Boston Pops mascot Yogi, and has been heard on dozens of recordings and evening at Pops TV broadcasts, as well as the nationally broadcast 4th of July specials. She's also been heard on several John Williams movie scores, including Saving Private Ryan and Schindler's List, and she can be spotted in the film, blown Away. She's also had numerous solo and orchestral recordings to her credit, on major labels, including Naxos, Phillips and Deutsche Gramophone. Marianne Gideon has received degrees from Boston University and New England Conservatory of Music.

So originally presented by Marianne at the 2015 National Flute Association annual convention in Washington, D.C., the subject of this podcast, Survival of the Flute. Asked follows a flutist in pursuit of a musical dream and professional fulfillment. And so we'll hear about Marianne's journey as she wrote the book. This book is about a person who sets forth on their journey with the essentials a metronome, a number two preferred pencil and a music stand to hold up the writings. But can they stay humble, passionate and eager, regardless of whatever challenges they encounter? Watch as an unexpected journey unfolds.

Marianne Gedigian, my friend. Welcome to Porter Flute Pod.

MG: Thanks, Amy. It's great to be with you.

AP: I'm here specifically to talk about a work of art that you created. It's in the form of a book, and it's called *Survival of the Flutist*. And it is such a great resource for every student, for every teacher, for all of us that come into contact with us with this book.

And so we want to know if this is the voice of you or one of your students or a different voice altogether. I'd love to hear about that and how the book came to be.

MG: Well, I love talking about this this aspect of the book. Amy So thanks for asking. I always say when people ask me if it's your voice, Marianne, I say, Take out the Y

Because I think after teaching for so many decades, you start to mirror and reflect, you know, information and feelings that have come to you either from within or from your students or colleagues. So I think each of us can sort of find a little piece of ourselves at different places in our journeys in this book. So the voice would be are not my or yours.

That's my feeling about it. And then as far as the genesis, it didn't start out as a book at all. Joanna Bassett had asked me when she was chair of the MFA convention to speak at the Flute Lovers luncheon. And I said, "Well, what should I talk about?" And, you know, Joanna, so generous and open minded. She said, "Speak about whatever you want."

And I said, "Well, what do people usually talk about?" Yeah, "well, lots of people talk about their careers." And I said, No, thanks. I can't think of anything less interesting than talking about my career at a flute convention. I get to do like talk about the time that I made fun in one breath. I mean, I just wasn't interested in such a thing.

And you waited for for someone you don't remember exactly. I mean, you know how it was in those days and we were so maniacally busy, you know, as if we're busy now. But we were busier then. And so we put it off and it sort of became a joke in my family, you know, "What are you going to talk about?"

“I don't know, I haven't thought about it,” blah, blah, blah. So it was about a month before the convention and I was on a flight from Seattle, you know, from Portland, Oregon, to Boston. And sadly, I was going to attend a memorial service for the great Laura all back. Laura was a brilliant oboist and just Schumann and she she died from the symptoms of early onset dementia.

And so I was headed to her memorial service, and I was quite distraught, as you can imagine, on this this plane ride and just feeling very open and soft and vulnerable. And I just I had a notebook with me that a student had gifted me. And I said, Ah, “I'm just going to start writing. I'm going to figure this out.”

And I don't know why, but I started with “Once Upon a Time” and it literally just poured out of me on the flight. And so the final product is really very close to a stream of consciousness that occurred on that flight. And I always say Laura was moving my hand because I was really stumped about even what to talk about.

AP: Nothing like a good airplane ride.

MG: Yes, our private offices right in the sky. I mean, being up at that altitude with, you know, distractions really clarifies us, doesn't it? I think we find that.

AP: Well, she was moving your hand.

MG: Yeah, I believe that. I mean, she she was saying, like she always did when we sat next to each other for a decade, you know, in the orchestra, she would say, Marianne, come on. She was I mean, Laura and I were complete opposites, right? I was constantly getting like talking and getting in trouble and being ill mannered. And Laura was completely buttoned up and always proper and having to say things like the conductor's looking at you, you know, I made it. So it would be very typical of Laura to bail me out one more time.

AP: Wow, what a great friend.

AP: Once upon a time there was a flutist who wanted to succeed in music more than anything else.

MG: I went to the luncheon, you know, to speak my high school teacher, you know, or Donna or Cal Ski was there and Leon Bisi was there and lots of friends at that front table and lots of friends and acquaintances throughout. And I had said a few words prior to the story that I was going to read. That was my talk.

And it was pretty emotional. You know, when you are there in gratitude of the people around you and celebrating something that we all love together. So I finished the story and Adam Workman from flew to Boston and Patti Adams of Louisiana, Phil and a million other things, right? Like Dynamo person, I like to say they storm to the podium and Patti said, That's a book and I'm going to illustrate it.

And I remember saying, That's not a book. You know, I just remember like scratching my head and saying, Patti, that's not a book. She said. And you know, Patti, if Patti says it's something, it's like that's but the hard period. At the end of the sentence, Patti said, it's a book and I'm going to illustrate it. And then Adam stepped forward and said, and I'm going to publish it.

And so this simple story, the simple talk became a book sort of against my better judgment. But Adam did such an amazing job with a keepsake sort of standard of book. I mean, everything is so finely executed in the book. And of course, Patti's illustrations are monumental and you could sit for an hour looking at any one page and discover layers and layers and layers of flute information in there inside stories, inside feelings. And it really the story is simple. The production of the book and the illustrations are lavish.

AP: Okay, so talk about the maturing of this mind that you have created because you're taking the journey. There is this journey and there's this path which I love. So can you talk about you know, you can't judge a book by its cover. This is not a children's book by any means. So I just want to know about the maturity that came to be in this. This person.

MG: Well, I mean, I have read it to kids. And the funny thing about the kids is they really hold on to the flip pages, you know, when you the opening pages and they hold onto one World with a musician, a flute player, be so mad.

I mean, that's just really hard for kids to understand. And I think that represents something we should all very closely look at in our lives. I get it.

AP: I mean, wow, what a question. Right? And so let's see. Can you explain for the listeners without giving it away what the flip is right.

MG: Well, you know, remix of sort of the premise of the book, the story of how it evolved. And as I say, very naturally stream of consciousness is that maybe in ourselves and maybe in our colleagues and maybe in our students and people we come across, we're there with them for the trials and tribulations and the frustrations. And we all know you will hear the word know many more times in this career than you hear the word yes from outside.

But I'm a believer in hearing the words yes from the inside. Right. And not better, but yes to myself. And so the book sort of has that that angle to it, that when you look at and I'm a Gemini, so of course I would see things in a duality sort of state. But when you look at a negative, you can sit with it there or you can metamorphosis from it.

With every negative there is a positive and it just depends on sort of how you look at it. So the flip idea comes in a physical flip in the book where you can actually lift a flap. Adams Brilliant idea or Pat is I don't remember. Those two were just full of incredible creativity when it came to putting this into a physical form.

So I think that it's just an idea of how you want to sit and move through something and that you have that power to make those choices and that pathways are not singular. They are if you want them to be right and but they don't have to be. And I think part of the book came from and you probably see this, too, Amy.

I mean, you know, living in Boston was a very specific kind of student back in the day. Right. All very conservatory minded coming to you. Amazing studios, very, you know, incredibly high, highly skilled flutist with big ideas for careers and that sort of thing. But a larger studio, a broader educational kind of canvas at a major research institution.

And so rather than, you know, pushing certainly not pushing students into a particular pathway, but also being there to help them expand their pathways. Right. Helping to motivate their personal, creative expansion. And I think the book came in large part from that, that celebrating, as we say in academia, different outcomes. Right. And outcome doesn't always come with a comma title, right? Name, comma, title. An outcome can come with an abstract and maybe even should come with an abstract. You know something you can't necessarily put your finger on or title. And so I think the book very much came from encouraging people to to continue their development, frankly, while their brains are still developing at that age and just to create space within themselves to define success as satisfaction, if I can put it that way, there are hopes and dreams.

AP: Here begins the flutist journey.

AP: Do you see this having a broader educational context? Do you want to see it in music studios, classrooms?

MG: Well, you know, I'm a total and complete introvert for somebody. You know, nobody ever believes that. But when I when I take those tests, I'm so far off the charts that I almost define a new level of introvert. So it's even just hard for me to to say, yes, they want to see my work or work in a classroom. I personally I don't, but I do. Personally, I do. But I will also say that, you know, the feedback has been beautiful about the book and, and the book itself. I mean, you know, as I said, the quality of the book, the illustrations, I mean, Patti is a literal fine artist.

AP: So let's let's go there. Let's talk about the calligrapher fine artist, Patti Adams. and by the way, an amazing flutist piccolo player lives in New Orleans. Let's love on Patti for a minute.

MG: I would love on Patti for an hour or a hundred years. Yeah, I mean, it's just a person that sees expansively use that word again right there. You cannot define this person, right? You cannot define her as an artist, as a flutist, as anything, because she somehow is the quilt, right? She is so vast in her gifts and talents and generosity. I mean, as if Patti needed to spend time making all of these illustrations for this story. Right. But she is that person that sees value and seizes it and contributes to it.

I mean, I just she's a remarkable human being, period. Well, she's open, she's selfless, she's humble. I feel that her walking up to you, she's done that before to other people.

AP: She's been on an airplane where some pilot was celebrating their final flight and she got everyone. She got some big piece of art done by the time the plane landed in his honor.

MG: That's right. And everybody signed it and everybody saw it. Yeah,

AP: I didn't want to be wrong, but, boy, the airplane's right. Well, you can find Patti Adams at Patti. I a damn as dot com. The cover is a mirror and this person is poking out from behind that. I mean, how profound, right?

MG: I mean, I think that's the gift of teaching.

Amy, I bet you would agree with me on that, too, is that it's not just that, you know, we're we're studying our students and trying to help our students, of course, number one through 100. But they also reflect so much of what we have hopefully work through our working through can work through together. And so the mirror is sort of the symbol of our portals in life and how, you know, you can take that step through the portal or you can choose not to. mean, whatever however you want to interpret it is up to you. I hate to micromanage that. If you see value to it,

AP: You know, I love that. Okay. So that's really why we read books, because they're not black and white. They're interpretive. And you can be open minded and open ended and live life in the now. I think that's also a message in this book.

MG: Absolutely. And, you know, we talk about it, right? You know, be present, be in the now. And yes, truly everything in our life is just desperate to take us out of that. Right. That the worry, the hurry, whatever. And I'll stop there before I start becoming Dr. Seuss. But, you know, this idea of the next things and the next only relies on the now the the the actual piece of where we are.

I can't take a next step if I'm not in my step to begin with. And so I just think we undervalue that sometimes. And that pressure, you know, gets spread in our community, in the world, in society, period. But certainly in our community, you know, students feeling pressure to get jobs before they graduate. Wonderful when it happens. Right?

We're all we celebrate that when that happens. But, you know, there is more to life than getting that job and experiencing life. And experiencing life outside of school is valuable, albeit scary and expensive. You know? I mean, we understand, but this idea that, you know, living in this space where you are can be a comfort and not a burden.

I hope that I hope that there's some of that message in the book. I hope some people might get some of that.

AP: There are challenges, doubt, worry, regret, envy, judgment, arguing, screaming, ranting.

AP: I think every generation has said, okay, I'm good. And then, maybe I'm not. Yeah, you know, and it's interesting, Amy, I use you all the time as an example and teaching, I always say, you know, you see Amy Porter on YouTube in the gown playing flawlessly. And, you know, you might have a great performance, but she's been doing it for decades and we have to remember that. And that is a difference in generation, right? Is that, sure, we listen to recordings, but when we see such a full finished product like you, you know, it's easy to say, well, I want to get there tomorrow.

But, you know, there is the gift of time, right? There is this idea of taking the time to develop and having the opportunities to fail. Failure is fantastic, right? We don't talk about that. We I mean,

failure is who who walked off stage with a great performance. And I learned so much. Most of us don't. Some people do, I guess.

I mean, I walk off stage, you know, wanting to put a bag over my head and then understanding, you know, reflecting and growing from there.

AP: I think that you do have development over time. You know, we can really celebrate that and the ups and downs, I was kind of kind of gearing towards comparison. And we take a shot of compare-Schlager, as Marie Forleo says -And so that's what happens when you think you're good. You think you're good, then you think you're not. Then you think you're good again, then you think you're not, you know, so this constant battle where I loved my I, I loved my naivete in a way, because I was never told I couldn't do it. So I started off a few podcasts ago by saying the number one way to success is mentorship and someone there for you and someone there as a teacher or a parent driving you, supporting you.

MG: So that is a component. Absolutely. I mean, role models, mentors, support systems, guides, all of that. Sometimes that has to come from inside, right? Sometimes people don't have a community where they can find that. But fortunately, that is the beauty of technology now, is that you can find a community once removed. If you don't have it in your physical, tangible life.

You know, my my absolute favorite part of the book, the story I see I stumbled even over calling it a book. Still is early when when the parent asked the professor, you know, what can my kid even do with a degree in music? And the professor says nothing, right? And then after what I whenever I say a long, uncomfortable silence or something like that yet anything.

And I think that is really the pioneering spirit of the arts and hopefully that continues in this accelerated society is that it's not an end game, right? There isn't an end, there isn't a finish line. And I don't mean to say that in terms of don't be satisfied, be satisfied, but, you know, continue, keep creating, keep expanding, keep exploring, keep failing, keep failing, keep failing.

Because when you fail, you redefine what that means to you write Failure is not a negative C there I am slipping it Failure is another portal. And how we define failure is typically to find out what somebody else's thoughts are about something not necessary, only our own thoughts. So if we start to siphon those things off, then we have potentials rather than deadlines.

I hate that word. Anyhow, think about that deadlines. That makes me crazy, you know? And then we really can celebrate small successes in life, which is frankly, what it's all about in my in my world, there are lessons about authenticity, curiosity, sincerity, compassion and love.

AP: Now we have another producer in this story, and it's someone who also believes that everyone has their own voice, and that is Adam Workman of Luda Street. Can you talk about how he had some impact on this work? And might I just kick it off by saying I loved the marketing of it where when you bought it, you got to one to give a friend like Hee, he gifted to two people.

And I just thought that was brilliant and giving and wholehearted. How did he impact this this project?

MG: Well, I mean, you just described him very well in your description of how he gifted the book. And I think that's something to think about with Adam in particular. I mean, he he owns and runs a business. So obviously there is that we need to make money.

Side of the business that's just factual, right? In which to run a business, you have to be able to make money. But I think Adam set forth on this business models thinking generously and of supporting a community, not just siphoning off from a community, which is also fine if that's what you do. You sell things. We want to buy them, no problem.

But I think Adam's whole concept was how to unite people, how to enrich our community. And I think you see that in terms of the expense that flew to stree buffered with this book, you know, to put, you know, he used things like thread stitched, binding. That's expensive. Amy That's

keepsake kind of expensive. And, you know, I think Adam's vision for his company is reflected in the book, too, because it's sort of reflected in that uniting concept.

And I don't think sometimes we give. I don't know about him. I won't be so specific, but we don't give people credit for those things that they do. We think I want the best price on a fluke to. Of course we do. I want you figuring out what is right for me, you know, and providing, providing, providing. This is a very different kind of providing in our community. And yeah, I think it really enriches us all to, to think that somebody wanted to gift us something that he felt was a value that he found valuable and the great expanse that it took him to do that. And the time I mean, that took a lot of time. I wrote the story like we I'm done right? And then the work began and then the work began.

AP: You also have an editor, Katrina Langer.

MG: Yes. That's Adam's sister, Right. Can you can you speak to what she did? Well, Katrina, you know, tightened it up. Katrina looked at it as that what I say as a civilian and said, you know, what are you talking about here? You don't you love those people in our lives. absolutely.

Those are our mentors, right? Those are the people that mentor us. Yeah. She looked at it. She said, this does not make sense to somebody who doesn't understand this or you don't need to say it this many times or you don't need to do this. And I don't think I argued once. I mean, I think I was like, take it, Katrina, you know, rewrite the whole thing if you want to.

But I think that's that's also part of Adam's generosity was that he liked the sort of genuine just I wrote it. Here's my story. Don't mess it up. Kind of this was this was that the pure version? In a way. But Katrina cleaned it up, you know, fixed language, punctuation, all of the things that, you know, make my toes curl up.

AP And we can't miss Jim Atwood. We know who he is. He helped put all that artwork into digital digital edits. Talk about Jim.

MG: Yes, Patti's husband former member of the percussion section of Louisiana, Phil contractor in New Orleans. And there you have it. I mean, that's when you talk about the genesis of this becoming a book.

Then you start talking about the community. Right. And it's sort of like when you're on stage, we look at you and we say, wow, you know, Amy's amazing. There are people that go into you being amazing. There is a team, a community, a support system, whether it's a family member who, you know, you say at the last second, my gosh. And I didn't think about what I was going to wear. This has a stain on it. How you know, or whatever it is, there is this team of people that work in a less flashy way behind the scenes. And without them, there would be no scene. And I think Jim is one of those people, you know, that just contributed in an epic way that we don't necessarily credit every time. So thank you for bringing him into this conversation.

AP: Of course. Well, I, I just wanted to thank you for talking about this piece of art, this work that you've done. And I wanted to credit everyone. You can find the book at Flutistry.com/products. What you could also do is just go to Flutistry and type the word survival and it'll come right up. Survival of the flutist. Go ahead and check out Flutistry.com for the book. And while you're at it, buy two so that you can gift it, right?

MG: Well, that's lovely. And I just hope that people find a moment of comfort and and sort of possibility in the book. So if buying one is in your budget, buying two is in your budget, if you find it a value. I'm very grateful that you may feel that way. So thank you for that. It's been such a help to everyone who's read it, so thank you for writing the book.

AP: And Marianne, my friend, thank you for being in my podcast PorterFlute pod.

MG: Thanks, Amy. I can't wait to catch up on some of your episodes and I just so enjoyed spending some time with you today. Thanks for inviting me.

Thank you so much to both of my authors for being in port, a flute Pod Storytime Platform. You can find survival of the flutist at [Flute History.com](http://FluteHistory.com). Visit our podcast website at [Porter Flute dot com](http://PorterFlute.com). You can find more about me at [Amy Porter.com](http://AmyPorter.com) [Amy Porter Productions.com](http://AmyPorterProductions.com). And, don't forget I'm PorterFlute everywhere on threads YouTube and Instagram. Thanks for being in Porter Flute pod. I'm so grateful for you.